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arming yourself with a lenient eye to my many shortcomings, while I will wield the pen of truth and justice.

PALETTA.

EVENINGS AT HOME.

II.

October 30th.

I have a new piano forte. It came upon a festal day. Artists and poets, and sweet singing maidens, were its royal escort. Not unexpected was its arrival, for a good fairy had promised to grant me "three wishes," the dearest of which was to possess a heavenly Chickering—a gifted beauty, silver-tongued, fit to express the tone-language of the divinest of music's divinities.

I said it came upon a festal day; the fête day is of mamma's appointing. It occurs every week, and is a second Sabbath—a musical Sabbath—a day to dispense with study and dullness—a day to doff the sober gray working-day attire and don the gala robe, *couleur de rose*, to quit the study-chamber, and descend in all holiday brightness to the parlor, there to listen to music—music over which I may have dreamed and divined, yea, and wept discouraged tears, to listen to the interpretation of an artist as inspired as erudite, one who is emancipated from the enthrallments of art apprenticeship, and whose playing has all the freshness and spontaneity of an inspiration—music that makes the heart thrill with a delicious pain, and sends the hot blood quivering in its courses, transporting the soul up and away from the dull earth to the far off violet skies, drifting, and floating, and dreaming upon soft, billowy clouds of rhythm, through the infinite expanse of harmony, up to the grand tonal heavens.

Mais revenons à nos moutons: le mouton is my new piano. Now my piano forte hath a name. Upon this fête she was christened. The august celebrant was Padre Giacomo. With liquid melody this high priest of tones baptized my beautiful, my darling one. Cecilia is her *prenom*, and Enrico *il re*, double coroneted with a bright tonal diadem inwoven with a poet's shining crown, is her royal Godfather. Other sponsors hath my beautiful one: Prince Giuseppe, the latest born and brightest of all Euterpe's garlanded train, and Henri, the magnificent.

Fairer appellatives of this high assemblage also honored the name day of my beloved. Psyche, a beautiful dreamer, with a Muse's tender gaze, and figure of lightsome, airy grace, ethereal as classic Rimini, whom Dante saw floating in the supernal world. Singing and swaying with a wavy, bird-like movement, la diva suggests the up-springing lark, that embodied joy that

"Singing still doth soar, and soaring ever singeth."

No, I like not the image: more, she resembles a light-winged fairy, or the soul's truest emblem, the tender, sublimated papillon. Had the flowers wings, as hath my dainty diva, I should liken her to them; not the low ground-flowers, not pansies with their thick velvet petals, nor yet the lowly daisy, with her sturdy, staring eyes. Mayhap some delicate air-plant, or such as aspire to heaven—the fragile morning-glory, with her gauzy, airy cups.

Smiling through innocent, tear-veiled eyes, is lovely Angelique, primal born of him who gives

to deeds and men of great renown a pictured immortality.

Now as the even of the feast draws nigh, two other visitants arrive: one, a shining presence, an aural brow, although uncrowned. Not self-esteem a favorite of the Muse, and seldom seen where art is homaged. Rough and stern his life, bitter and arduous and pitiless his task, so nobly wrought. Bowed with the day's oppressive care, scarce a glance he deigns to give his eager friends, but sinks with wearied weight into the proffered seat.

And now the lofty musical divine recommences. As the sweet wind wanders through glade and glen, through tangled wild and haunt of bird, so do those delicate fingers sweep over those ivory billows, stirring the moon-lit leaves, swaying the dewy flowers, awakening the birds, and moving the wild waters to musical murmur.

Seated on my lowly tabouret, with ravished heart, I press my throbbing brow against my dulcet Love—more dulcet than a thousand airy harps.

Leaning against the wall, his languid arms supported by the mantel-altar, in pensive majesty stands Enrico. Surcharged with music, he seems to listen to this tonal tempest, but his heart is beating to its own sweet measures, and airy shapes and unformed sounds are wreathing their rhythmical cadences within his teeming brain.

Remote, in a shaded corner, her sweet, sad eyes half veiled, reclines the haughty Madeline. Reserved and silent, with seeming hauteur traced upon those noble lineaments, you deem her heart dull and irresponsible; but do not so esteem her, for thought and sense do sympathize, and reel with nectar-harmony. By her side, the brilliant Prince, his dark eyes gleaming and glowing with tonal fire. High-born and high-bred, this hero of tones bears other gifts to art's sacred shrine than those her votaries oftenest bring, a rare musical heart, manners most courteous, a cultured mind, and soul æsthetic.

Under the low candelabra, listening and musing, stands one of nature's rare interpreters. He is not tall, but the high, aspiring soul, and figure of almost boyish grace, give impress of far nobler stature. An ecstatic countenance, radiant with accomplished dreams. Joy-lit eyes, within whose azure brightness contemplation and his pictured art are mirrored.

Another chord is struck, a vital one. A low melody, deliciously painful, flows out from those silver keys, and though sparkling cadenzas and brilliant arpeggi embellish and half conceal the humble *motivo*, still a picture is wrought by those tender, airy sounds, in vivid distinctness. A shrined home, a parent pair, and heart-treasured memories arise. Whispered blessings are recalled, and a sainted mother's prayer, recorded now in heaven.

Now, when the last heavenly strain had softly died away in a few detached notes, and Il Padre had turned upon his revolving seat to converse with his accustomed lively wit, he found mamma's face all a-flame with feeling. And Angelique, lovely enthusiast, nestling near the thronal chair of dear mamma, conversing in low and excited tones of the happy feast now ended—of the rev-

erend Master's wondrous power so sweet and strangely moving.

And the life-tired one, half buried in his easy fauteuil, unwrapped in visions of political strife, brooding o'er his country's ills, has been pierced by those silver arrows. Aroused, he opens wide those wondrous eyes of limpid blue, rises, draws up his toil-bent form, smiles, and the warm glow lights up the placid face, as moonlight on the crusted snow. Chatting, and smiling, his martyred soul transfused with music, sublime he stands, a monarch among the crowned.

Soft falls the leaf-shadows from the trellised vine, deepening the minor dream-light in that melodic parlor. One by one the guests depart, and vanish in the evening gloom. *Adieu*, sweet day, *au revoir*, *chers amis*.

CECILIA.

LITERARY MATTERS.

POEMS BY ELIZABETH AKERS (FLORENCE PERCY).
PUBLISHED BY TICKNOR & FIELDS.

Mrs. Akers's poetry belongs to the melancholy school, which was in vogue some years back among female poets, and had she but written in the days of Mrs. Hemans, Mrs. Sigourney, and others of the same comparative merit, her poetry would doubtless have become popular, but since those primitive days of female poetry we have had Mrs. Browning and Jean Ingelow, and by them have been taught that woman is as fully possessed of the "divine afflatus" as man, hence her pretty, mournful but trivial, poetry makes but little impression on the mind, being forgotten almost as soon as read, and leaving behind it no remembrance of originality or superior excellence. Mrs. Akers seems to have the universal feminine weakness for violets, and we find those modest little flowers predominating strongly in her poetry, and forming the burden of many of her songs.

Here is a pretty idea in the "Vision of Violets":

For lo! the mossy and rain-fresh ground
Was all empurpled with violet bloom;
Hollows were hidden and hillocks crowned
Leaving so little breathing-room
That all the wondering air around
Was hushed and fainting with much perfume.

Pressing and pushing in purple crowds,
Laying, lovingly, cheek to cheek,
Drifted together in waves and clouds,—
As some mad painter, in wildest freak,
With wealth of pigment his canvas shrouds,
Lavishing color in mass and streak.

"Castles in Spain" is one of the most poetical pieces in the book, containing some exquisite writing, and presenting Mrs. Akers at her best, being divested of much of the superfluous melancholy that characterizes the rest of her works.

We give the poem entire:

Sit down beside me, my love and my pride,
Ere the stars brighten the sweet eventide;
Clasp in your true hand my fingers again;
Tell me the tale of our castles in Spain!

Let the proud pass with their grandeur and gold;
Riches like ours are not purchased or sold;
Little we care for the greed or the again,—
We, the possessors of castles in Spain!

Wealth may exult in the pomp it creates,—
Naught the world knows of our foreign estates;
Little it thinks that, afar o'er the main,
Rise the fair walls of our castles in Spain!